Transport packaging: reuse of pallet wrappings and straps

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EU amends rules on reuse of transport pallet wrappings and straps

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2026/429 of 25 February 2026 on supplementing Regulation (EU) 2025/40 of the European Parliament and of the Council by exempting certain economic operators that use pallet wrappings and straps from the 100% reuse requirements of these packaging formats

Update

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) sets new rules to avoid and reduce packaging waste, and to stimulate reuse. The initial rules required that, from 1 January 2030, some types of transport packaging, including wrappings and straps used to stabilise and protect products placed on pallets during transport, must be fully reusable for operators transporting products:

- between the various sites of their company, or linked companies, within the European Union (EU)
- within the same EU Member State.

Under Decision 2026/429, this requirement has been removed for wrappings and straps for stabilising and protecting products put on pallets. This is because the initial 100% target was considered to be too disruptive and costly for the operators concerned.

What is changing?

Under the PPWR (Regulation 2025/40), from **1 January 2030**, operators must ensure that 40% of the following transport packaging is reusable within a reuse system:

- pallets
- foldable plastic boxes
- boxes
- trays
- plastic crates
- intermediate bulk containers

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- pails
- drums and canisters of any size or material, including flexible formats
- pallet wrappings or straps for stabilisation and protection of products put on pallets during transport.

A more ambitious reuse target of 100% was initially set for this packaging where it is used by an operator to:

- transport products between sites within the EU, including sites of linked or partner enterprises (PPWR, Art. 29(2))
- deliver products to another operator within the same EU Member State (Art. 29(3)).

Following Decision 2026/429, the 100% reuse target no longer applies to **pallet wrappings or straps** for stabilisation and protection of products put on pallets during transport. However, it still applies to the other transport packaging formats listed above.

Operators using pallet wrappings or straps will still have to ensure that the overall 40% reuse target is met from 1 January 2030. This reuse target must be calculated on the basis of a calendar year, and per operator using these types of transport packaging.

By 30 June 2027, the Commission will develop a methodology for the calculation of these re-use targets.

Why?

Reusable pallet wrappings and straps are already used to transport some goods. However, a complete transition to reusable formats would disrupt supply chains and involve costly adaptations. Transitioning to fully reusable pallet wrappings and straps involves high initial investments, and the development of automated solutions that are not yet sufficiently developed. Around 600,000 businesses in the EU would be affected, with estimated adaptation costs of €610 million (Eurostat 2025).

Timeline

This decision exempting pallet wrappings and straps from the 100% reuse target applies from **26 May 2026**.

The PPWR requirements for transport packaging will apply from **1 January 2030**.

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What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The reuse targets concern the use of transport packaging within the EU, not the use of transport packaging from outside the European Union. However, the laws regarding packaging systems within the EU could potentially have indirect effects on non-EU suppliers.

Background

New rules on packaging and packaging waste, including design and waste management, are set by the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation 2025/40 (PPWR). This Regulation aims to:

- avoid and reduce packaging waste, and stimulate reuse
- make all packaging on the EU market recyclable in an economically viable way
- increase the recycling of packaging materials, especially plastic, and their reuse.

The new rules set stricter sustainability, labelling, and conformity requirements on all food packaging. The rules will also apply to suppliers of packaged food to the EU market who are based outside the EU.

The regulations will apply from different dates (see New EU packaging rules explained).

Resources

Eurostat (2025) Structural business statistics; Enterprises by detailed NACE Rev. 2 activity and special aggregates

Regulation (EU) 2025/40 on packaging and packaging waste (PPWR)

Sources

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2026/429 on supplementing Regulation (EU) 2025/40 by exempting certain economic operators that use pallet wrappings and straps from the 100 % reuse requirements of these packaging formats

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